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ABSTRACT

Children drawn on a variety of experiences when they first become interested in literature. Cultural as well as economic backgrounds may influence their selection. Attitudes from family members may also influence these choices. A study determined the effect of exposure to literacy in the early years on reading in the "formal" school years. Subjects, 51 fourth-grade students selected from 2 separate classes in a suburban, top-level school, were asked to complete questionnaires with their parents. Results indicated: (1) no significant differences in the reading ability of students who were exposed to much early literacy experiences versus those who were not; (2) the amount of time spent on the exposure of literacy did matter; and (3) attitudes regarding the time spent in literacy activities also affected results. (Contains 37 references. An appendix presents the questionnaire.) (Author/RS)

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# THE EFFECTS OF EARLY LITERACY ON THE FOURTH GRADE READER

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## ABSTRACT

Children draw on a variety of experiences when they first become interested in literature.Cultural,as well as economic backgrounds may influence their selection. Attitudes from family members may also influence these choices.It was the purpose of this study to determine the effect of exposure to literacy in the early years on reading in the "formal" school years.An examination of how children view reading was also made.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my husband Howard,and my son Jeremy for allowing me the opportunity to follow through on my dreams of obtaining my Masters Degree.

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Many factors contribute to the students ability to achieve,including the amount of exposer to a print-rich environment.Early research on the effects of home environment and reading have led us to believe it is a significant factor in the students abilities. Parents' perspectives on literacy are related not only on the child's activities in the home environment,but also on the way their child performs in the structure of the school learning environment(Davidson,Snow,1995). G.W. Wells(1986),states"family interaction is associated with successful reading in the early years".

A study comparing early readers to a non reading group matched in age,vocabulary,and social class,was conducted in 1995(Dale,Crain-Thoreson & Robinson).The purpose was to seek characteristics of the home language environment and also of the children's oral language skills, that might differentiate the two groups.The findings indicated that emergent literacy skills were more highly developed in the children who had been involved in literacy activities previously.Reading levels for age groups 6.6 were very advanced.

Through the years,many viewpoints have been aired. Depending upon the researchers' backgrounds and interests, emergent literacy has been associcated with everything from language learning, to the way specific classroom tasks are acquired(Crawford 1995).The theory of reading readiness rests on a number of factors.Despite the

ingrained presence of readiness philosophy,significant changes have been seen in the field of early literacy. Young children are coming to school with a great deal of prior knowledge about reading and writing,and are able to apply this knowledge in very meaningful ways.Children are able to relate school experiences to parents or siblings,or just talk about a wide range of subjects because of this early exposure to literature.Emergent literacy skills were more highly developed in the children who had been involved in literacy activities at home,as compared to those who were not(Davidson,Snow 1995).Sharing time in the home appeared to give the student a lot of language, and this in turn gave the student a solid background for more extensive learning (Wells 1986).

Early effects of home environment on literacy focused on family and the amount of time spent in sharing ideas,and feelings in a research study presented in September 1996.Information about the childrens' everyday experiences were collected by asking parents, thru the use of a questionare,about their activities at home.Data was compiled,and results showed that families from all types of groups reported frequent opportunities for their children to engage in literacy at home.Children growing up in homes where there was a greater emphasis on literacy performed better in school(Baker,Sonneneshein, Serpell,Scher,Fein,Munsterman,Hill,Goddard-Truitt,and Danseco,1996).

While a variety of studies on emergent literacy effects exist,little research exists to determine whether these early efforts produce learning which is long lasting, or has a long term effect on later achievement.

HYPOTHESIS

To provide additional evidence on this question,the following study was undertaken.It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the reading ability of students who were exposed to much early literacy experiences versus those who were not.

PROCEDURE

This study consisted of 51 fourth grade students selected from two separate classes.One class included 12 boys and 13 girls who were previously tested,and shown to be at grade level,4.0-4.6.The second class,26 children, was made up of 15 boys,and 11 girls. They were 1.5-2.5 levels above grade.

The school selected in this research study was located in a suburban town.It was considered to be a top level school which puts alot of emphasis on pride and success.The children came from all ethnic,and socio-economic groups.The curriculum deals with developing a creative and independent thinker.

Permission slips were sent home notifying the parents of the forthcoming study.The children were asked to sit down with their parents and talk about what was going to be done. When all the permission slips were returned,a questionare

was sent home with each child.

QUESTIONS

1.What language is spoken in your home?

2.Do you read to your child? If so, how often?

Daily
Weekly
Other

3.Are books readily available to your child?

4.Is there a special place where reading takes place?

5.How is reading time shared in your home?

Aloud
Silently

6.Which family member(s) has the most influence on your child?

7.How long is reading time?

8.What types of books does your child have?

9.How often do you and your child visit the public library?

10.How often do you and your family visit a musuem?

11.What types of games does your child play most often?

12.Does your child have access to a computer?

13.How much time does your child spend watching T.V.?

Alone
With family

14.Does your child ask for help in reading signs or labels?

15.Tell me about the mealtime conversation?

16.When did your child first become interested in books?

What types...?

Pictures only...
Words and pictures together....

Each was given instructions as to how the study was to be completed.The children shown here,were very excited about

the prospect of being included in a research project.They all vowed to be the best literacy achievers during the holiday break.Included with each package sent home was a reminder to all,that literacy is a very important part of our everyday lives.It can be achieved thru many avenues. All family members were encouraged to participate.

RESULTS

The results shown below were compiled from personal interviews conducted at a parents night out.Personal response was better than expected,although not as good as previously hoped for.Original survey sheets were sent out to 51 fourth graders from two different classes.Only 14 responses 7 boys and 7 girls were received from a class which originally consisted of 12 boys and 13 girls who were tested at the average level.The response from the advanced group,which originally consisted of 15 boys and 11 girls,was just about the same,16 responses,6 girls and 10 boys.Since I met with the parents in person,many felt compelled to tell me that they felt guilty about their forgetfulness to the original response request.

1.What language is spoken in your home?

| AVERAGE GROUP.....6 English | ADVANCED...13 English |
|---|---|
| 8 Mixed | 3 Mixed |

2.Do you read to your child?....How often?.....

| AVERAGE GROUP.....9 Yes | ADVANCED...14 Yes |
|---|---|
| 5 daily | 8 daily |
| 4 weekly | 6 weekly |
| 5 No | 5 No |

3. Are books readily available to your child?

AVERAGE GROUP.....12 Yes
* 2 No

ADVANCED.....16 yes

* only school books.....

4. Is there a special place available where reading takes place?

AVERAGE GROUP....9 no special place

5 bedroom/quiet room

ADVANCED....13 no special place

ADVANCED...3 bedroom/ quiet room

5. How often is reading time shared in your home?...Aloud/Silently

AVERAGE GROUP..6 silently
5 aloud
3 both

ADVANCED..2 silently
7 aloud
6 both
1 none

6. Which family member(s) has the most influence on your child?

AVERAGE GROUP..10 mom
3 dad
1 other

ADVANCED..4 mom
7 dad
3 other
*2 no response to the question.

7. How long is reading time?

AVERAGE GROUP..8 couple hours weekly

6 daily

ADVANCED..7 couple hours weekly

9 daily

8. What types of books does your child have?

Both groups reported a varied interest in books. They reported adventures,fantasy,chapter stories,mysteries, and historical biographies.

9. How often do you and your child visit the public library?

AVERAGE GROUP..3 weekly
4 monthly
7 less time

ADVANCED..2 weekly
9 monthly
5 less time

10. How often do you and your child visit a museum?

AVERAGE GROUP..7 few times during the year
7 not with the family

ADVANCED...8 few time during the year
7 not with the family
1 alot

11.What types of games does your child most often play?

Both groups had varied interests.....board games,computer games,sports,such as soccer,baseball,basketball.....lead the lists.

12.Does your child have access to a computer?

AVERAGE GROUP..8 yes
6 no

ADVANCED..13 yes
3 no

13.How much time does your child spend watching T.V.?

AVERAGE GROUP..8 alone
6 family

ADVANCED..5 alone
11 family

Time spent...1-2 hours daily.....
More time spent on the weekends.....

14.Does your child ask for help in reading signs or labels?

AVERAGE GROUP..9 yes
5 no

ADVANCED..6 yes
10 no

15.Tell me about mealtime conversation?

AVERAGE GROUP..10 none
4 small talk

ADVANCED..8 none
8 small talk

16.When did your child first become interested in books?

AVERAGE GROUP..14 in school

ADVANCED..7 in school
9 when they were young.

What types?.....

Pictures only.....

AVERAGE GROUP..11

ADVANCED..3

Words and pictures together.....

AVERAGE GROUP..3

ADVANCED..13

CONCLUSIONS

Almost all children are exposed to some sort of literacy before they enter "formal schooling".It is ultimately up to parents to guide the child down the correct path.Parents have an influence on the type and extent of what the child will learn.They must be involved with not only choosing the correct materials, but presenting them as well.Literacy will develop when a positive environment is created.

It was earlier hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in the reading ability of students who were exposed to much early literacy experiences versus those who were not.The presumption has held true.Research although did show that the amount of time which was spent on the exposure of literacy did matter.Attitudes regarding the time spent in literacy activities also seemed to effect the results.Children are ultimately responsible for their own destiny.Their eagerness to learn,the positive influences which surround them at home and at school,and the willingness to suceed in whatever they choose,will all effect their literacy experiences.

EARLY LITERACY: RELATED RESEARCH

Children who had parents that were involved in literacy activities at home were shown to have a higher emerging literacy rate. Parents provided more books,flash cards,trips to the library,and engaged in more verbal stimulation with their children.This is turn lead the children to become better, more independent performers in various literacy activities. Literacy developes because the child sees what can be creatively constructed (Wells 1986).Meaningful encounters with print are critical to emerging literacy.Teal and Sulzby,(1989), have documented that learning to read is a continuous process that begins well before children receive "formal" reading or writing.

In seperate studies,researchers revealed that children as young as three years of age were showing a high interest in literature.Is there a solid baseline for beginning literacy? The primary focus of a study by Bader and Hildebrand, 1992, was to investigate the possiblity of determining baseline for emerging literacy skills.They found that by the time children entered kindergarten,many had acquired a fair amount of preliminary literacy skills.Even children as young as three had already become attuned to some aspects of emerging literacy.

In this age of the T.V. and the computer,it is interesting to note,that children still fare better when a book is put into their hands.Literacy messages on T.V. are not all what they're made out to be. The reason why Ernie can't read is that most messages on Sesame Street

had to do with the names and shapes of letters,not the sounds. While this is good to the child's development,it doesn't really promote good emerging literacy skills. Ernie can't read because the focus is on the letters and sounds only.Words were strung alone.Focus was apparently based only on the assumption that learning to read must be a mastery of corresponding letters and their sounds(Elster 1995).
When a child first encounters print,their sense of curosity is peaked.First the colorful pictures,then the verbal language occurs.It is when this language begins then parents need to step in. Early literacy in the home must be the root for the future development of a blossoming tree.Modeling from parents, quiet areas for reading,frequent and positive trips to the library,and many parent/child conversations must occur. Understanding the literacy environment of children from all backgrounds could help teachers set goals too.Parents perspectives on literacy ARE related not only to the experiences they make available to their children in the home, but also to children's independent performances on tasks designed to assess emergent literacy. The pleasures of reading must be demonstrated to children by explosing them to a print-rich environment.

Conversations that occur during parent-child book reading or play can provide contexts for relatively decontextualized talk,of the sort that may relate to children's literacy skills(Davidson/Snow 1995).Meal time is a good setting that can generate productive communication.

Beals(1991) found both large inter-family differences in the amount of explanation engaged in during meals and a correlation between the amount of explanatory talk at age 3½ and literacy outcomes at age 5½.Children are able to relate experiences.They seem to tell everything the other children need to know in order to understand.They know what they have to say.It's not that they say a lot,but they make it clear,(S.Beaty,Personal Communication,1988).Well(1986) found that the frequency of "listening to stories"(book reading)during the preschool years significantly correlated with teachers' evaluation of children's oral language at age 5. The home of precocious readers were shown to be richer in language.In this study,various methods of testing was done. Children were tested using oral and silent reading comprehension paragraphs from the Spache Diagnostic Reading Scale.Data was also collected from the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test.Other tests that were administered were the Wide Range Achievement Test,and the Metropolitan Reading Test,Level 2.Speech of parents and target children in interaction was also analyzed (Davidson,Snow,1995).Communication is the key.We expect to find a language rich environment in the homes of early readers. In the analysis of parents combined,the authors found that the langugage environments of children are the product of the adults and siblings they interact with on a daily basis. Both parents were found to have contributed a significant amount of knowledge to the development of a literate child. It is interesting to note that even the oral language that

was acquired thru game time contributed to a well focused child.Taking all this information into account,we find a number of situations for discussion.Approaching literacy from a preschool area is extremely important.Emergent readers have been characterized as "picture-governed",(Sulzby 1985). They are an important graphic resource in reading.Emergent readers draw on a variety of informational sources.Most notably, book illustrations and memory for a certain text,or story that has been read aloud to them by an adult.Emergent readers' integration of VISUAL,and NONVISUAL sources of information highlights the continuity from emergent to alphabetic reading. Information from pictures provide an extention of the written text.The combination of book illustrations,and memory which is brought by the child can prompt additional information and enhance the learning atmosphere.Before formal reading occurs,many children already possess a highly developed system of response to books,(Clay,1979,Doake,1985,Holdaway, 1979).

Cues come from a variety of areas..Visual,such as printed letters,and other grapheme,and pictures/illustrations,or Nonvisual,such as prior knowledge of sound/letter relationships, syntax,semantics,or just general word knowledge.It is thru these cues that a good basis for learning is established. The importance of language context,rather than oral explicit of the written text is more valuable.Much research has focused on how picture information and memory helps children create oral readings that approximate the language which is contained in the printed words,(Cager,1993,Papas & Brown,1989,Putnam,1989,

and Sulzby 1985).Picture books provide an important intermediary position in modern literacy development.Pictures provide an important peg from which children can take text language which is remembered from prior read-aloud sessions.All teachers need to encourage children to participate in reading sessions, whether they be aloud or silently.The role of the teacher or adult reader is important to the childs' ability to gather information.The reader points and comments on various illustrations to allow the child to interjet with personal experiences.This will help motivate and promote the children to use inferring statments to express what has been read. Reading involves the integration of graphic information "on the page"(print and picture) with information in the head of the reader.The role of memory and the ability to reason out what has been heard is an important link."As the emergent reader moves away from picture information towards a more reliance on memory for text,then importations from prior read alouds,background knowledge,personal responses to story characters and actions as well as importations from pictures might work to support a reading that holds together at the level of discourse rather than a "piecemeal" reading based on just picture information"(Elster,1995).

Children have different reading behaviors.Depending upon their developmental stages,they bring various meanings to their text.Incorporating personal experiences into their readings will represent an important connection between background experiences,and reading acts.Personal experiences,

brought by the child tie into the entire learning process. Parent-Child literacy interaction in the home plays an important role in fostering the acquistion of literacy."Recent research supports positive effects such as a greater ability to attend to text and school type learning,an increase in print related knowledge,a heightening of young childrens motivation and desire to interact with books and learn to read, and also a readiness to benefit from formal instruction" (Robinson 1996).Emergent literacy research strongly suggest that prior to formal instruction,young children may learn many important concepts about written language through naturally occuring literacy events in the home.Purcell-Gates, 1993,says "such concepts are essential for pre-reading children to "make sense" of their beginning formal instruction".Gates further suggests that "kindergarten holds the big picture about the functions of print and further asserts they develop the "disposition" to be literate through early learning experiences and are much more likely to be successful in the classroom.As reported in Robinson,(1996),Whitehurst and associates(1988) assesed the effectiveness of an intervention program designed to optimize parental readings of picture books to young children.The results were significant.Increases in expressive language development occured.Data showed a strong relationship between the frequency of reading in the home. Real reading should be consistant.There should be a long term commitment,not just something that is done at "special times". Introducing quality books into the home on a regular

basis has been shown to stimulate and contributes and benefits family literacy behaviors.Interests in reading can grow when positive literacy behaviors are exhibited.

The home literacy environment can be a wonderful place for fostering good reading behaviors.The exemplary work of Dolores Durkin over the years have given us plenty of positive and encouraging results.Her work with precocious readers,those who acquired reading abilities prior to school entry,led all others. She identified factors that were in the home environment were related to later successful reading acquisitions.The role of the home,in promoting attention to the elements of literacy may be a crucial factor in the emergence of children's literacy knowledge (Teale,1978,Clark,1984). Applebee(1978,1980) has provided details that children develop a sense of story very early on.This process he contends has been seen as early as age two...albeit with adult assistance.

An independent study done by Doiron and Shapiro,was devised to measure the effects of home literacy.A questionaire was made to cover several areas of reading and writing.These areas included: quantity and variety of printed material, frequency of children being read to,types of literacy experiences,exposure to the writing process, and modeling of literacy skills.Results indicated that children who received attention and were given the motivation to explore literature came out significantly higher than those who received nothing,or were left to themselves to explore literature.

The importance of parents being involved in the entire literacy experience was also a subject of this study.Subjects from higher literacy homes had more story elements present than those children from lower literacy homes.The results were almost doubled. Mean score for the higher level group was 6.5 for four year olds, and 1.9 for three's, while the lower literacy group was 3.6 for the fours, and 0.5 for the threes. Home literacy environment,just as it affects concepts of print and print awareness,also has an impact on children's storytelling ability. Parents should be encouraged to provide a literacy rich environment.

We know that family literacy encompasses ways parents and children use literacy at home and in their community. Parent involvement and intergenerational programs need to be stressed.Early approaches to family literacy center on "parents as partners" in helping their children read. Research supports the belief that there is a strong link between the home environment and childrens' acquisition of school based literacy.(S.Akroyd,1995),found that the experience parents had with their children, had a strong impact on the families as they explored avenues for reading and writing.

Every family's participation contributes to the complete understanding of the potential for a successful home-based literacy program experience.Brian Cambournes' theory that literacy learning optimally occurs when similar conditions as with spoken language occur,is very true.It is a process that needs to be incorporated into ALL of our daily lives.

Literacy is the key that opens the door of opportunity to young people; illiteracy breeds stagnation and unrealized potential(C.Unwin,1995).Family literacy is characterized by motion; it is a process of becoming,not a product that emerges once certain criteria are met.Learning is dynamic,not static. The ways families use print while interacting with and responding to each other are constantly evolving.It shouldn't matter what background a child is from.Parents need to be active supporters and need to constantly be involved.Parents are role models for the literacy behaviors of their children. Unfortunately children of those parents who are poor models find that each year they slip farther behind in school(P.Edwards 1995).A book reading program as described by Edwards,1995,would allow parents and children to experience success.It was designed to facilitate a "fit between parents' expectations for success". Communication between the home and the school were instrumental to the success to this program.Keeping the parents as partners to the success of their children allows for a positive experience for all.It is said that children imitate what they see,so it's up to parents to show them.Parents can be effective teachers too!To succeed in school, children need help.A collaborative partnership is necessary between the home and school environment in order for all children to reap the benefits of literacy. Willingness of parents to promote a spirit of shared responsibility. To be actively involved in all decision as far as literacy,and following through on them.

Parents need to build a feeling of self-esteem through literacy.Some guidelines as mentioned in Fredericks & Come, 1995,are: spend quality time together,encourage your child to read for fun,listen carefully to your child's ideas,find ways to praise your child daily,enjoy family activities and projects,share favorite books,and stories,talk to your child often,establish a daily read-along time,engage your child in natural reading activities,and most of all,model the act of reading for your child.Maintaining enthusisam is very important in promoting good literacy skills in children. Family literacy involves everyone,from infants to adults. Forming open and non-stressful activities are essential. Reading should lay at the heart of family (S.Akroyd 1995). Research in family literacy revealed its power for the literacy development of both adults and children, and that language is culturally bound, and transmitted from generation to generation. When families work together to achieve good literacy,wonderful things can occur.

As valuable as family literacy is,their real strength must be in the ability to foster autonomy and self-reliance with families,school,and community.A project completed by Shanahan,Mulher,and Rodriguez-Brown,1995,quoted that "family literacy programs can reduce parents' feelings of isolation from school while helping them support their children's learning by,supporting home environment,keeping positive attitutes towards school,and keeping literature available in the home".

They also supported the idea that parents be involved in the homework aspect.Creating a "Whole Environment"for your child. Family literacy programs can reduce parents' feelings of being isolated or shut out,while still supporting their childrens learning.Simultaneous and connected learning opportunities for children and parents develop social networks of literacy learning and use that will nuture ongoing literacy development(Shanahan,Mulhern,&Rodriguez-Brown 1995).

Another aspect of parents staying involved in their childrens' literacy development is portfolios.This type of assessment would allow all participants the means to share the responsibilies for evaluating his/her performances. Parents can collect data just like teachers.They can be monitoring their childrens reading and charting their progress. By monitoring the range of home-based activities,teachers may gain further insight into the students' flexibility and confidence in their developing reading abilities. Family portfolios may provide rich demonstrations of special occasions in which literacy is used in the home. The family portfolios also show any changes in the interaction process within the families.Parents interests and involvement in school experiences are valued,and should be promoted by teachers who recognize parents' significant role in childrens' literacy development(Hoffman,1995).Learning the importance of mutual realtionships for the better of the child.Parents are a childs first teacher, they must begin correctly.

While the influence of the home environment as the site of children's earliest language learning has long been recognized as significant, we can't overlook the relationships that some schools have on the success or failure of each child.Some have suggested that the relationship between between school success and a range of factors associated with family and cultural backgrounds account for the greatest proportion of variability in students literary performances, (Rowe,1990,Rutter,Tizzard & Whitmore,1970).Bruner (in Briggs, Potter,1990),has pointed out that parent involvement in schooling is often a "dustbin term",which can mean all things to all people. In today's culture,too many children come from single parent households that don't lend themselves to the quality which is needed to establish good literary education.

The TTALL.....Talk to a Literacy Learner program found, that if parents focused on interaction with their children, they responded better. This program aimed to achieve a lasting relationship between parent/child to promote literacy growth. It implemented specific educational goals,to increase parental participation in literacy activities,to change the nature of interaction adults have with children as they read and write,to introduce parents to various literacy activities which are successful in the school program,and finally to train the community as to what is "good literacy".This home based program seemed to be successful. It had a real impact on the way parents interacted with their children.

Parents acknowledged that they learned strategies they didn't have before. The program helped the parents to choose resource materials to help their children with book selection and use of the library. Parents gained new knowledge.Families become closer.They reported to have shared more experiences.Childrens' literacy increased.Performance levels on assessments were increasing.The entire learning process was impacted.The findings from this project supported the claims of researchers,(Epstein, 1993,Topping & Wolfendale,1985,Turner 1987)that "Parent participation programs have the potential to lead to significant gains in students ability to use literacy for a wide range of purposes".

While many researches have shown the idea of educating parents and other family members into the school curriculum is good,there are some that think it will create alot of turbulance.McCrackin,1995,feels we should "watch our backs". A pledge to participate by parents may falter when they find other more important things to attend to.Still the majority disagree.

Establishing an open relationship between school and family still holds true with the majority.Reading Today Newspaper,Jan/Feb 1995,reported on a program that was set-up and targeted children K-3. The programs purpose was to encourage parents to read aloud to their youngsters."Reading Together.... Make it a Tradition".The main sponsor was Chrysler Corp.,produced by Scholastic,Inc.,in partnership with the American Federation of Teachers and the Assoc.for Supervision and Curriculum.

The program targeted more than 100,000 families throughout the U.S. Guidelines were set-up.Suggested areas to target were;

1. Time to play....card/board games...These provide ready-made reading opportunities...Reading Directions.....
2. A"Taste of Menus...meal time...Make a list of what's for dinner...Read it together....
3. Let your fingers do the reading..When your child wants to make a phone call,mail a greeting card...Make this a time to use the phone book together....
4. Check off daily chore charts....
5. Have a family reading time instead of T.V....
6. Discuss what is happening in the newspaper.....
7. Make a memory scrapbook....

Establishing open and caring relationships.Promotes good feelings.

The parents are not the only ones who can help with promoting good literacy.Siblings can help too! The influence of adults on children's learning to read is well known,but the influence of siblings on their brothers and sisters also comes up. Many adults recall younger days when "playing school" was done.Nearly everyone has had an experience such as this in their lives. In many household today, both parents work. They spend much of their time at home taking care of the house.Many siblings go home to an empty house. Often older siblings are the responsible people. Siblings often spend time interacting after school.As a result,siblings are becoming active,positive supporters of literacy. Their unique bond provides a relationship on which we must capitalize to encourage traditions of family literacy (Baghban 1995).

Literacy for Today....Newspapers in Action,(Sept.1995), recommends that parents can help learning by establishing guidelines for their children,even if their not around all the time;

1. Set-up an established,well organized reading area..
2. Keep up with your child's progress.Monitor daily behavior and performance...make adjustments as needed.
3. Show interest in all your childs' work.

Enthusiasm and social skills blossom when real learning takes place.When such interactions occur over a period of time,they parallel the interactions amoung children,and reading doesn't just become part of their daily lives,it becomes meaningful and rewarding.Attitudes on reading can change."Once you can read,You can do anything"(unknown 5yr.old).

What motivates a child to want to read? Can this feeling be recognized? Teachers recognize motivation.They say it is at the heart of many of their colleagues.It's a problem that must be faced in education today. Motivating children to read is a high priority because many students are at risk of reading failure.Palmer,Codling,Gambrell,Oct.1994, reports four aspects of what motivates.They report; prior experience with books,social interaction about books,assess to books,and book choice.The role these experiences play in motivation and literacy development may be closely linked to self-perceived competence in that they provide the essential scaffolding necessary for successful reading experiences.The data reveals that children place high priority on reading materials they hear about from friends,parents,and teachers.

Social interaction is a primary factor in literacy development Children's motivations relate to literacy development(Guthrie & Sweet 1993).They recognize eight motivational factors,curosity, challenge,social interaction,compliance,recognition,competition, amd work avoidence.Through these diverse ideas,students bring experiences and knowledge tothe classroom.Recognizing the different characteristics is the first step towards understanding how to foster the growth of long-term literacy participation.

The most reliable indicator of motivation for literacy learning is not the type of reading program that districts follow,but the actual daily tasks that the teacher provides in their classrooms."Open tasks allow the children to be in control of their progress"(Turner,Paris,1995).Open tasks provide challenge,choice,and student control over their learning.Opportunties to collaborate with others and to construct meaning through reading and writing for authentic purposes. Children should be given a choice amoung literary activities, they should be challenging,they should have control over their work,collaboration should take place,constructive comprehension for making meaning through reading,and most of all,consequences of what might happen in an open activity.A significant goal of literacy is to support learners' independence and versatility for reading.If students are to become motivated readers,they need the proper tools to guide them on the right path to the ultimate goal of good literacy.We must allow them to choose the paths that fit their diverse goals...purpose...interests.. and social needs.

The curriculum,environment,and the teacher all influence learning.Policy regarding the role of the school matters too. We know that children come to school with prior knowledge,but some researchers still insist that children need to be evaluated on an individual basis.Significant gains in literacy achievement have been seen.These results support the argument for a print-rich environment as early as possible. Does age have anything to do with the decision to expose children to literature? Maturation view suggested that when a child mentally matured,then they were ready for school. Morphett and Washburne(1931) suggested that reading instruction be postponed until a child reached a mental age of 6yr.6 mo. Many still follow that theory.Reading Readiness view suggest that the role of teacher is to provide a child with sequenced lessons in reading instruction....alphabet letters...and sound/symbol relationships.....not a very successful way of developing literacy.

Emergent Literacy view that preschool children have common home experiences.Durkins' work marked the beginning of many years of inquires of educators,linguists,anthropologist, and psychologists into the role of home/school experiences in literacy learning.Findings from an extensive body of research conducted primarily in homes indicated that a definate correlation exists....meaningful storybook interaction and early reading is highly successful (Clark 1976 Durkin 1966).

Children grasp books early.Book experiences have facilitated the development of schemas for the understanding

of print.Both writing and play have dominant roles in literacy development.Children write before they read. Writing develops in predictable stages.Writing fascilitates reading. A young child experiences so very much.Experience is the key linking perspective in language and literacy learning. It is the learning theory of Vygotsky..1978,that provides an expanding understanding of how language and literacy learning occur. He goes beyond Piaget when he suggests that learning occurs because of social interaction between the child and the adult....or literate peer.The adult modeling or scaffolding the individual,eliciting responses and questions,building a bridge for learning! Literacy learning theory supports interaction,writing development,and play. Literacy is learned....Research suggests that access to print and literacy experiences and mediation of this experience by an adult or more literate peer is essential (Vygotsky 1978).

We must redefine what is basic to literature. A literacy curriculum that emphasizes what is basic values and build on the knowledge that students bring to school.We must emphasize the construction of meaning through activities that require higher order thinking and offers extensive opportunties for learning to apply literacy strategies and their underlying skills in the context of meaningful task (Strickland 1994).

Readers and writers bring a great deal of existing knowledge these processes.Even the youngest child is aware.They have knowledge about world and literature to construct meaning.

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# APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS

1. What language is spoken in your home?

2. Do you read to your child? If so, how often....

   daily
   weekly
   other

3. Are books readily available to your child?

4. Is there a special place where reading takes place?

5. How is reading time shared in your home?

   Aloud....
   Silently.....

6. Which family member(s) has the most influence on your child?

7. How long is reading time?

8. What types of books does your child have?

9. How often do you and your child visit the public library?

10. How often do you and your family visit a museum?

11. What types of games does your child most often play?

12. Does your child have access to a computer?

13. How much time does your child spend watching T.V.?

    Alone.....
    With Family.....

14. Does your child ask for help in reading signs or labels?

15. Tell me about the mealtime conversation?

16. When did your child first become interested in books?

    What types....?

    Pictures only.....

    Words and pictures together....